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THE exterior decoration of the ordinary American cottage has been for some years past undergoing a revolution in favor of better artistic treatment. The ordinary rectangular clapboard dwelling, with its sharp edges and angles, has too long dominated our landscapes, and people have now reached the conclusion that no home can give satisfaction to its occupants unless its exterior, as well as its interior, possesses artistic grace.

PERHAPS no section of the country is characterized by greater beauty in its cottages and suburban homes than the country homes of California. In a country without traditions and with no past history to pay respect to, the people of California seem to have given themselves *con amore* to the advancement of house architecture. Their homes based, of course, on various well known styles of architecture, have been modified to the needs of the Californian climate, and dwellings based on the Colonial, Queen Anne, Eastlake and Romanesque styles have been erected, which are largely free from the restraint of hard and fast lines, while graceful, they are, at the same time, peculiarly Californian in feeling.

OF course the same kind of thing has been going on all over the country as well as in California, and in accordance with the spirit of energy and enterprise which characterizes our people, the first departures from the bare outlines of the past resulted in exaggeration and mere oddity. But to-day architects are evolving a finer class of houses on more refined and more artistic outlines. We have referred to the California homes in particular because a climate of sunshine will be necessarily the first to do away with unattractive and unsuitable exteriors, as well as the dark and heavy interiors that are usually associated therewith.

IN connection with the present artistic revival in the construction of domestic buildings, it may be noted that the great facility for sawing and cutting woods has resulted not merely in a lightness and grace, but too frequently in over ornamentation, until buildings appear to be incrusted with an eruption of mouldings and fretwork that is certainly anything but artistic. The artistic cottage possesses neither the squalid angularity of a wooden structure, designed simply as a shelter for its inmates, nor the fulsome pride of extravagant ornament.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

WE have often thought of the possibility of ready-made artistic paper buildings, made up of solid sections, cast in moulds, which could be shipped to any part of the country and be erected in a day. But paper is expensive, and stone and concrete are too heavy for transportation. Hence wood is at present the most accessible material. We are glad to note, however, that there is at present quite a friendly rivalry amongst architects to produce beautiful and harmonious exteriors as well as equally attractive interiors, and coming generations will doubtless have little to complain of in the aspect of the ideal dwellings we are rapidly approaching.

IN interior decoration grille work is a feature which is steadily growing in popularity. The elegant and artistic grille which is now being used in beautiful and appropriate designs for separating parlors, hallways, bay windows, alcoves and stairways, is an architectural success, based on a combination of usefulness and beauty.

IN the field of art hardware the advance has been as marked as in any other decorative material. The best talent is used in executing beautiful designs, which can be had to harmonize with any style of interior decoration—Colonial, Renaissance, Louis XV., Louis XVI., Empire, etc. In the matter of coloring also it seems as though perfection has been reached, so that an owner can obtain hardware to harmonize with any color scheme. It costs no more to trim a house with artistic hardware than to spoil it with common goods. In these days the hardware, as well as gas fixtures, carpets, draperies and wall-paper must harmonize.

CONVENTIONALITY has almost reduced us to rigid black and white. Ancient life was a blaze of color. The people lived in it—of course they loved it. The street scenes were moving pictures. Every station had its appropriate costume, and no one thought of the servile imitation of special fashion which makes our dress to-day almost a dead level or mediocrity.

Such close relation to art made her *bon camarade* with the poorest. They loved and knew her, and she dwelt with them. Good taste became an inherited instinct—not a hot-house production.

IT is now found that in the art of etching photographs on glass, a very satisfactory result may be secured by covering the surface with a solution of gum made sensitive with bichromate of potash, and printing the same under a negative; after the image has in this manner been produced, it is dusted over with minium or red lead, and the red picture which is thus obtained is fired and burned according to the usual process. The easily soluble red glass which comes from this method is treated with strong sulphuric acid, when a white matt design is produced, and the picture appears by transmitted light as a positive. Some specimens in this line by German artists are described as exhibiting superior merit, as compared with those produced by ordinary means.

THE use of ornamental tiles, as a special branch of decorative art, is rapidly on the increase in this country, and when one considers the wide possibilities of this ceramic product, together with its almost infinite application to the decoration of modern interiors, it will be admitted that we possess a decorative agent of no mean importance. The various American art tile companies are now manufacturing mantel facings, decorative panels, stove tiles, calendar tiles, clothes hooks, paper weights, ink stands, candlesticks, bonbon boxes, etc. In the category of purely decorative compositions are produced pictorial designs in relief, ideal heads, portraits, mouldings of children and female forms, pastoral scenes, either in dull or enamel finishes, all of which effective productions are extensively manufactured in this country.

Tiles with glazed finish are produced in a wide variety of soft, rich tints, the delicate tints of pale blue and greenish and purplish grays being particularly beautiful examples of transparent colored glazing. Some of the factories make a specialty of artistic tile designs suitable for solid wall decorations, in all the leading styles, for libraries, dining-rooms and bath-rooms,

having geometric, floral and figure embellishment. The body of these tiles is a well vitrified faience, the glaze being thoroughly incorporated.

One of the most important pieces of complete work executed of late is the interior decoration of the William Rockefeller mansion of Tarrytown, N. Y., consisting of enamelled terra cotta or faience, in the vestibule, with grained arches and loggia, the latter embellished with a five foot frieze, heavy cornice and paneled ceiling. The style of decoration is the Italian Renaissance, in high relief, the color of the enamel being in such perfect harmony with the wainscoting of Tennessee marble that at a short distance no difference in shading is perceptible. This terra cotta body is white in color, and of a somewhat sandy nature, fired hard, and covered with a glaze or enamel.

In the manufacture, inlaid and relief tiles, America has advanced rapidly, but in the production of hand-painted art tiles, the progress is not so manifest. But the men engaged in this special industry are indefatigable workers and prolific artists, and the work done is characterized by exquisite conception and the most painstaking execution of details.

A LADY of our acquaintance, who is greatly interested in American china, recently conceived the idea of giving a series of mid-day entertainments to her lady friends, which she christened "American Luncheons," for the reason that not only was the bill-of-fare distinctively American, but the chinaware used on the table was entirely of American manufacture. As this suggestion may be followed by others with profit, we subjoin a sample:

MENU.

BLUE POINTS ON HALF-SHELL.

(Oyster Plates of Mazarine Blue, made by the New England Pottery Co., East Boston, Mass.)

BOUILLOON.

(Two-handled Covered Cups, Belleek ware, made by the Willets Manufacturing Co., Trenton.)

CREAM SALMON, SARATOGA CHIPS.

(Semi-Porcelain Plates, Clifton Shape, Underglaze Blue "peony" Decoration, made by the Chesapeake Pottery, Baltimore, Md.)

BROILED QUAIL, CURRANT JELLY.

(Semi-Porcelain Plates, Underglaze Royal Blue, made by International Pottery Co., Trenton.)

SWEETBREAD PATES.

(Fluted China Shells, made by International Pottery Co., Trenton.)

BREADED LAMB CHOPS WITH MUSHROOMS.

(Thin Vitreous China Plates, made by Greenwood Pottery Co., Trenton.)

TOMATO SALAD.

CHEESE AND WAFERS.

(Thin China Plates, made by Knowles, Taylor & Knowles, East Liverpool, O.)

NISSELRODE PUDDING.

(Ice-Cream Cups on Platters of Thin Belleek China, made by Ceramic Art Co., Trenton.)

COFFEE.

(After-Dinner Coffees of Egg-shell China, made by the Ott & Brewer Co., Trenton.)

At the four corners of the centerpiece were Cupid candelabra, made by the Ceramic Art Co., and in the center an artistic jardiniere, from the Burroughs & Mountford factory of Trenton, containing ferns. On the table were faience-almond shells, in underglaze decoration, from the Rookwood pottery, Cincinnati, with salted peanuts; bonbonnières in underglaze, triangular and heartshaped, after the Japanese Kioto ware, made at the Pauline Art Pottery, Edgerton, Wis.; individual saucers of pink Belleek, in the form of snail shells, from the Etruria Pottery of Ott & Brewer; bread and butter plates, from the Willets Manufacturing Co., and butter spreaders with decorated china handles, made by the Ceramic Art Company. Beside each guest was a delicate souvenir, consisting of a china shell flower, holding sweet violets, from the American Art China Works of Trenton. No foreign productions could be more dainty and artistic than this combination of domestic wares, though selections from other American potteries could be made with equally satisfactory results.